Prospects and Challenges of E-Governance for Service Delivery in Nepal

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Key words: MDG, e-governance, ICT Application, challenges, Nepal

Abstract

The growing application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their subsequent use on strengthening interaction among public entities, civil societies, communities and citizens has given rise to a new governance paradigm known as e-governance. E-governance came both in developed and developing countries as a quest of making the public institutions more transparent, accountable, and efficient for the better delivery of public services. This paper intended to discuss the prospects and challenges of ICT for improving service delivery in Nepal which also helps to meet the millennium development goals (MDG goals). The study concludes that there has been improvement in the application of ICTs, however, still lacking skill and technical know-how to use ICT for the better delivery of services which is also in Nepal.

1. Introduction

The recent Nepal’s MDG Report 2010 shows an encouraging profile for achieving its goals. But it is also irony that Nepali people are living with the lowest life expectancy and having a large share of undernourished children. Despite the country has made significant progress in different sectors development has still been significantly unequal across the regions and social groups. One of the shortcomings could be lack of effective governance for the delivery of services and expand accessibility of services to the people who are left out behind. Introduction of ICT or e-government for the improvement of governance in this context would address such issues within and outside the organization. Within the organization, it enhances automation and thereby more routinization, and standardization which may enhance efficient and predictability of public actions. Outside, it connects the organization with the environment, enhances interaction and improves citizen-public organization-bureaucracy interface. This in turn, as argued enhances quality of services and make public officials respond to the needs of citizens. In other words, deployment of e-government in public organizations is more concerned with efficiency in decision making, and, on the other hand, to improve quality of services. The third aspect of e-government is to enhance democratic norms and make citizens more inclusive and empowered. The application of ICT in education, health service delivery through telemedicine system and enhancing capacity of the people could be worthwhile these days.

In Nepal, the public, private and the nonprofit entities have been in the process of introducing ICTs for their performance. The e-policy in Nepal focuses on using e-government especially for the delivery of programs and services and the usage of information infrastructures for improved internal administrative procedures. To augment the e-governance initiatives a number of legal instruments have been introduced and necessary institutional mechanism has been created. However incidence of digital divide both at individual and institutional level is common in
Nepal. Despite these issues, Nepal generally takes ICT that plays a role for economic development and poverty alleviation efforts which is the first goal of MDGs. For this, telecommunication sector has been taken as important factor for rural agricultural development and expansion of markets. Nepal also uses MIS to improve public sector governance, and service delivery such as land management, public finance, procurement and tax collection in addition to disaster management. In this context, this paper discusses of the prospects and challenges of implementation of ICT to augment services that help to fulfill the MDGs in Nepal. In this paper, we focus on three outcomes of e-government in Nepal to see a) internal efficiency of public organizations, b) improvement of public services, i.e. quality of services, and c) accountability of public officials and hence empowerment and more inclusion of citizens in the decision making process.

2. Status of MDG Achievement in Nepal

One-third of the people in the globe particularly in developing countries are still fighting for their survival due to poverty and the delivery of basic services. To solve such issues both local initiatives and the global partnership for development is considered important. The UN global conferences of the 1990s and later in 2000 adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and drew up a number of key global development goals and targets. The International Development Targets (IDTs) and also the Millennium Declaration of the 2000 of United Nations are the pronouncements of global commitment for putting the needs, rights, and aspirations of the people for enhancing the capacity to fight against poverty, disease and environmental problems.

In Nepal, the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) and the PRSP objectives were directed in line with meeting the MDG goals. Later the Three-Year Interim Plan (2008-10) also renews Nepal's commitment to the MDGs. The progress report of the MDG in 2005 and again in 2010 indicates that Nepal is likely or potentially in line with meeting the MDG goals, however, service in all areas and the to all social groups are still not reaching in a judicial way. The present development and the MDG indicators and their values give a mixed picture of Nepal’s status of development and MDG in progress (See Table 1).

Table 1: Key development and MDG indicators and their values for Nepal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Population size (projection in millions)</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Population growth rate (projection in average)</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Life expectancy at birth (year)</td>
<td>63.69</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GNI per capita (US$)</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Real GDP growth rate (average)</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inflation rate</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Human development index</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Population below national poverty line (per cent)</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Proportion of employed people living below US$1 (PPP) per</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Value 1</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Value 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Underweight children aged under five years (%)</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Literacy rate (15–24 years)</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Net enrolment rate in primary education</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Infant mortality rate</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS prevalence for 15–49 years (per cent)</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>People using wood as their main fuel (per cent)</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Energy use per unit GDP (toe/mRs)</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Commercial energy use per unit GDP (toe/mRs)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Area under forest coverage (per cent)</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Population with sustainable access to improved water source (per cent)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Population with sustainable access to improved sanitation (per cent)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite the improvement in MDGs indicators, Nepali people have the lowest life expectancy in Asia, the largest share of undernourished children, and most importantly, development has been significantly unequal across social groups – an aspect that is not reflected through MDG indicators that measure national averages. Ensuring equitable growth is one of the key challenges at this point. To bridge this gap improvement in governance with its application of ICTs would be expected to be able to address such issues.

3. **Government to E-governance: Theoretical discussion**

ICT may look into the innovation and any application of technology such as the for improving governance and its impact on better service delivery. Every public activity involves information generation, sharing, and dissemination and communicative aspect. In this regard, institutionalization of this capacity is a sin-qua non for any public organization to be effective, efficient, inclusive, and responsive. The development of ICT or e-government may be argued to enhance this capacity of public organizations. Even more with increasing emphasis on accountability of public officials of their deeds and make the system more transparent, ICT or e-government is considered an instrument to achieve these objectives. This is because ICT helps tasks of public officials to be standardized, uniform and more predictable. This removes uncertainty, and ambiguity in the delivery of services.
Four words government, governance, e-government and e-governance are common uses in administrative literatures (also see Box 1). The Weberian philosophy states that the constitutional legitimization provides the government a monopoly in terms of societal control. Thus, the government, in brief is taken as an institution that is formally constituted, bureaucratically organized, and usually constitutionally legitimated.

Governance started to attract policy attention and get into development discourses around the period of late 1980s. Governance as a concept came in recent times to the increasing interaction of three actors – state, market and the civil society. It is taken as a process rather than immediate decision. It is a set of continuous process that usually evolves slowly with use rather than change dramatically. Good governance started to drive policy debates as a means of securing development and growth, thereby requiring governments to be open and predictable. This openness and predictability of government functioning is further echoed at e-governance.

The terms of e-government and e-governance are often used interchangeably (Riley, B. Thomas, 2003). E-government is the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to transform the traditional government by making it accessible, transparent, effective and accountable. Following UN’s five guiding principles show’s the key notion of e-government (United Nations, 2002).

- Building servicers around citizens choices
- Making government and its services more accessible
- Social inclusion
- Providing information responsibly, and
- Using IT and human resources effectively and efficiently

E-government does not mean putting more computers on the desks of government officials and is more than just a government website on the Internet. In a simple way ‘e-governance’ is viewed in the perspective of two major shifts in socio-economic arena – governance and information revolution. It uses electronic means to support and stimulate good governance. The emergence of ICTs along with a strong wave of globalization, and has a profound impact in the development of e-governance notion. E-governance is not only the usage of ICTs but is determined by political, social, economic and technological aspects. It is important to establish relationship between government officials and citizens, providing greater access to government information and services by making the government accessible online; promoting citizen participation by enabling citizens to interact more conveniently with government officials, such as by requesting government service and filing required documents through website; increasing government accountability by making its operations more transparent, thereby reducing the opportunities for corruption; and supporting development goals by providing business, rural and traditionally underserved communities with information, opportunities and communications capabilities (Baev, Vitality, 2003). Thus it increases the flow of information accelerating the process of decision making by optimizing resources, and making the mechanism for decision making self-regulating.

The objective of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties - government, citizens, businesses and its employees. Two major objectives of e-
governance are ‘service to the public sector’ and ‘efficient government’. The ‘service to the public’ fulfills the public’s needs and expectations satisfactorily on the front-office side, by simplifying their interaction with various online services. The other objective ‘efficient government’ helps for government operations to facilitate a speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective process for performing government administration activities. Significant cost savings (per transaction) in government operations can be the result.

4. Methodology

To generate the primary information two offices – Internal Revenue Offices located in Kathmandu were selected as the unit of analysis. In Nepal, the application is ICT is still in primitive stage. The Internal Revenue Department in Kathmandu is considered one of the leading organizations to use ICT in its day-to-day business in Nepal. The respondents were both among the service providers and service receivers. The effective size of the respondents was 10 officials (8 Tax officer and 2 Chief tax officer) from among the service providers and 47 service receivers (initial plan was 100 respondents from among the service receivers). These service receivers were selected employing accidental sampling method from among the persons who approach these tax offices during the fieldwork period. Some of the service receivers were further discussed to supplement the queries with regard to the implementation of ICT for improving service delivery. The selected service providers were interviewed and the service receivers were administered a questionnaire. Data was collected during the first week of October 2010.

5. Status of ICT development in Nepal

The introduction of e-governance in Nepal has not a long history. E-governance is expected for supporting good governance initiatives of the government by enhancing efficiency and effectiveness; improving information dissemination and service delivery mechanisms through use of ICTs; and stimulating the development and growth of ICT sector within the country. To implement the e-governance initiative there is a need for infrastructure development, improvement of law and public policy, building e-literacy, enhance accessibility, ensure privacy and security, and development of workforce. In addition there is a strong commitment from the leadership for the development and give attention for strategic investment, collaboration and citizen participation. Once government makes strategies to transform the governance process, it must prepare to meet the significant challenges and opportunities that will arise during implementation. To augment the ICT initiative in Nepal, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has made a number of efforts by bringing IT Policy, enacting legal instruments, and action plans.

1. Development of IT Policy and creation of legal instruments

One of the key functions of developing the e-governance is introducing IT Policy in 2000 in Nepal. The ‘IT Policy 2000’ specifies its broader objectives to make information technology accessible to the general public and increase employment through this means, to build a knowledge-based society, and to
establish knowledge-based industries (His Majesty’s government of Nepal, 2000).

Later in 2010 the government brought new IT policy in Nepal which aims as (GoN/MoST, 2010, p 8)

- To make ICT as government priority area and practical;
- To encourage for the development of a knowledge-based society;
- To make e-government inclusive and effective for disseminating information and delivery of services;
- To use ICT as productive resource in economic and commercial sectors;
- To access to international efforts and developments of IT; and
- To make effective government integrated data centre to develop IT as development infrastructure

The new IT policy tries to ensure the more use of ICT in governance of both public sector and private sector. In addition to IT Policy adoption a number of legal instruments are created to develop IT sector for augmenting e-governance in Nepal. Some of them are Electronic Transactions Act and Digital Signature Act 2008; Cyber Law in 2007; E-Government Master Plan 2006; Telecommunications Policy 2004; National Strategy Paper on ICT (National Planning Commission), 2002; Electronic Transaction and Digital Signature Act (ETADSA), 2057 (2000); Copyright Act, 2059 (2000); Telecommunication Act, 1997 and Telecommunication Regulations 1997; and National Communication Policy, 1992. These efforts obviously create an environment to develop ICT sector in Nepal. However, the commitment from the policy makers and the policy implementation is equally considered important.

2. Institutional mechanism of Implementing ICT in Nepal

Some of the important institutions created towards ICT sector are among Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), High Level Commission for Information Technology (HLCIT), and Nepal Telecom Authority. In addition to these governmental entities, a number of private organizations which offer tele-services including telephone, and internet services. There are 22 Internet Service Providers (ISPs), six VSATs (Very Small Aperture Terminal), eight radio paging service provider and some 15 software-developing companies have been operating their services. The government has also emphasized BOT system and permitted FDI for the development of this sector. (Source: [http://www.apdip.net/projects/dig-rev/info/np/](http://www.apdip.net/projects/dig-rev/info/np/) accessed on 13. 03.2010). To enhance institutional strengthening of municipalities and air transport capacity enhancement Tribhuvan International Airport including 3 remote domestic airports has been supported by Asian Development Bank.which is one of the important endeavours to contribute IT development in Nepal ([http://www.adb.org/ICT/nep-projects.asp](http://www.adb.org/ICT/nep-projects.asp) (accessed on 10.10.10).

3. Increasing trend of ICTs utilization in Nepal

Effective application of ICTs in public administration and governance area in Nepal remains relatively low. Even though the trend to use personal computers (PCs) and
networking has been increasing, there is conspicuous lack of systemic approach to deployment of ICTs based delivery models in the administrative set-up.

The administrative structure is yet to make forays into databases, MIS intranets and meaningful web presence – basic attributes that determine e-readiness in Nepali bureaucratic set up to plunge whole hog into e-governance. Out of total 26 ministries 25 ministries have already introduced web and 22 ministries email IDs. While only around 50 percent of the government departments have the web presence (See Box 2). IT education in different secondary level schools, colleges and training institutes also help to augment the utilization of e-learning. The recent introduction of telemedicine in remote villages would be very useful to deliver health related services.

In addition to governmental departments, academic institutions, private organizations and the NGOs have also increased significantly and coming up with web presence. In a way there is an overwhelming increment for using telephone and mobile phones (See Box 3). In 1999, the teledensity reached one line per 100 inhabitants which was 1.4% in 2003, and expected to 15% by 2017. It was the private sector that first connected Nepal to the internet in 1995. Penetration in Nepal is continually on the rise and is at an estimated 0.96 per 100 people. The ISPs source reveals that the number of subscribers to their services has an annual increment of 50 percent. There were only 35,000 users in 2000 which has increased by ten times in 2009. These trend shows that there is a growing trend for the application of ICTs in Nepal. It is estimated that business organizations use 30 percent of internet services followed by international organizations based in Nepal and private home users by 20 percent each. The NGOs occupy 15 percent share, educational institutions 10 percent, and government entities just limited to only 5 percent. There has been increasing number of computer users across the rural areas through schools, colleges and computer training institutes.

Compared to urban areas, rural areas are lack of accessibility of telephone penetration where 85 percent of the total population (27.5 million – projected in 2009) lives. Nepal Telcom source shows that only 1963 Village Development Committees (VDCs) out of 3915 VDCs have been served with at least one PCO (Nepal Telecommunications Authority, Management Information System (MIS), Vol. 8). The general phenomenon is that telephone penetration has been heavily skewed in favor of urban areas as a significant number of VDCs remain underserved.

6. Data analysis. Status, importance, and consequences

As said earlier we focus on three aspects of e-government in Nepal in terms of enhancing internal efficiency of public organizations; improvement of services delivery; and maintaining accountability of public officials and hence empowerment and more inclusion of citizens in the decision making process.

1. Improvement in internal efficiency

With regard to understand whether the IRD adopts E-governance using ICT technology to enhance the internal efficiency for delivery of services to their clients and other official purpose. As most of the employees were given training for the application of online/internet facilities it helped to some extent to increase employees’
skill by 60 percent and another 30 percent very much. As a result 70 percent crowd has been decreased significantly in these offices. In addition, the interviewed officials and the observation at these Tax offices also reveals that these offices have been trying to update their working process by introducing/using desk top technologies such as text processor, e-mail, and other internet facilities; decision technologies, e.g. spread sheet; database technology and also networking inside the department/sections. As a result, the 60 percent employees think it is easier to deliver services and another 50 percent on improvement in accessing services (See Table 2).

Table 2: Employees response regarding the improvement in internal efficiency at IRD. Percentage distribution. (N – 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of services</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easier to deliver services</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of services to clients</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful in decreasing crowd</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful for quick decision making</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase employees’ skills</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question was: Do you think the service quality has been improved in IRD after introducing ICT in terms of Accessibility of services; Helpful in decreasing crowd; Helpful for quick decision making; Easier to deliver services; and Increase employees’ skills. The answer alternatives varied from (i) very much; (ii) to some extent (iii) very little

The sample offices were also found 3 computers in each these offices were provided for public usage to facilitate their clients for accessing online services. The office also disseminates official information through online system which helps to increase the internal efficiency. Despite these facilities, most of the service receivers have been facing problem of using e-service and the employees also don’t have enough technical knowledge for using ICT. When asked with the employees respondents only around 30% are well trained, system has not been updated, lack of computer and networking. In addition, corruption, delays in services and problem of supportive attitude is lacking among the employees which may

2. Improvement of services delivery

One of the major objectives of the introducing ICT in public offices is to deliver service effectively and efficiently, i.e., improvement in the traditional mode of service delivery. To understand the service delivery status in the service receivers’ eyes, a mixed picture of their impression was found. The majority of the respondents viewed that there has been much improvement in terms of easier to know information in time (70%); easier to make complain (59%); and service delivery in time (52%) (See Table 3). On the other hand, more than half of the respondents confirmed that reporting of services like ‘decreasing discrimination’ (61%) and ‘easier to report’ (50%) has been in the improvement process. In Nepal, it is widely believed that one should have ‘afno
manchhe’ (informal networking) to get the service easily and timely. The survey reveals that the introduction of ICT in public office like Tax office has improved to some extent to decrease the discrimination.

Table 3: Citizens’ response in terms of various issues regarding ICT utilization at IRD. Percentage distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery in time</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in pleasing employees</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to make complain</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to report</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to know information on time</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease discrimination</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain accountability</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of citizen’s demands in policy making</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering citizens</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question was: What has been change in IRD after introducing ICT in terms of Service delivery in time; Decreasing pleasing employees; Easier to make complain; Easier to report; Easier to know information in time; Decrease discrimination; Maintain accountability; Inclusion of citizen’s demands in policy making; and Empowering citizens. The answer alternatives varied from (i) very much; (ii) to some extent (iii) very little

Usually the service receivers have to contact the Tax offices for submission of ‘income and expenditure report’ and ‘Value Added Tax’ (VAT) report, obtaining ‘personal account number’ (PAN) number, and understanding of policies and procedures related to tax administration. For this the clients either have to directly contact the Tax office or can obtain such services by using the webpage. Despite the Tax office introduces its online facilities to deliver services promptly and effectively, only 27 percent were found using ICT for getting services from IRD though 76% of the service receivers know IRD introduces ICT in their business. Of the total 27 percent, 19 percent internet, 6 percent use telephone, and only 2 percent uses webpage. This shows, the skill to use computer is lacking which affect the efficiency in service delivery system through ICT usages.

3. Inclusion in decision making

With regard to understand the improvement in democratic decision making of the organization the service receivers were also asked whether IRD is able to ‘maintain accountability’, ‘inclusion of citizen’s demands in policy making’, and ‘empower citizens’ after the application of ICT in its offices. Fifty eight percent respondents confirmed that there has been improvement in maintaining accountability to some extent. However, the service receivers found very little improvement in the ‘inclusion of citizen’s demands in policy making’ (45%) and ‘empowerment of citizens’ (41%) (see Table 3). The respondents also viewed that there has been improvement for the
delivery of services to some extent compared to before introducing ICT in these offices.

Despite the government of Nepal has positively giving attention towards the development of ICTs and subsequent implementing e-governance, a number of issues has yet addressed. Some of the challenges for successful implementation of e-governance are (Bhattarai, 2006):

- information transparency
- legal issues
- resources availability
- infrastructure including connectivity in rural areas
- capacity and awareness
- political will and government action
- content (local content based on local language) and,
- assessment of local needs and customizing e-governance solutions to meet those needs.

7. Conclusion

Nepal takes ICT as both sector and enabler to facilitate the economic development. The government of Nepal views e-governance in terms of its potential for bringing about a major paradigm shift in the way public administration functions and also as a potential means of augmenting basic tenets of good governance. E-Governance has been taken to break the barrier of geographical diversity by using ICTs which helps its effective and efficient transformation. In Nepal, various sectors such as education, health, agriculture, tourism, trade, among others have been using information technology. The number of telephone/internet users has been increasing significantly and legal and necessary infrastructures has been created. But challenges exist with regards to making full fledged e-governance a reality due to various reasons. Besides providing service to citizens, it’s important to empower and motivate government employees to expect better service from them. On the other hand, skills to use computer and online facilities on the part both employees and the service receivers are grossly lacking. Thus, e-Governance should transform the government workers into empowered knowledge workers. There is still considerable lack of awareness and knowledge on e-governance related issues among policy and decision makers. In addition the success of e-governance would depend on attitudes, knowledge and skills specially within the public sector that are required to initiate, implement and sustain e-governance initiatives. The government has taken ICT as a strategic factor as it is an effective tool to alleviate poverty through MIS and information dissemination. The case study also shows growing application and encouraging result for delivering the tax collection services. In fact, the main challenge to use ICT is to coordinate political will, financial resources and technical expertise to transform policy into action. Then only it helps to influence the general publics’ perception of the trustworthiness and effectiveness in terms of delivery of services and realization of good governance in the country which is important to alleviate poverty – as one of goals of the MDG.

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